



“Correct Me If I’m Wrong”

*The quarterly bulletin of the Global
Community of Mission Information Workers*

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Collaboration is the theme of this April 2025 edition of our bulletin. We examine how collaboration is manifest within a network, between organizations, and on specific projects. What good tips can you offer our community about effective collaboration in your sphere of work? Feel free to share your experiences with info@cmiw.org.

Collaboration in the Research and Strategic Information Network

In this interview with *Tanya Van Horne*, Global Director for Issue Networks of the Lausanne Movement (<https://lausanne.org/issue-networks>), the CMIW uncovers how collaboration can and does happen in the Research and Strategic Information Network:

[CMIW] Tanya, what are Lausanne Issue Networks and what purpose do they serve?

[Tanya] An Issue Network in Lausanne is a neutral, welcoming space in which church and mission leaders are invited to engage in work that’s rooted in shared theological foundations. Issue Networks are designed to help the global church engage meaningfully with today’s complexities by convening leaders who share a vision for impactful, sustainable mission.

Each Issue Network specializes in a specific area of global mission, drawing from a wealth of expertise that spans continents, generations, and disciplines. These networks provide Lausanne—and the broader global church—with a nuanced understanding of complex mission topics. They bring a depth of insight that would be challenging for any single group to achieve on its own.

[CMIW] How does collaboration normally happen within a Lausanne Issue Network?

[Tanya] Issue Networks are meant to be hubs for meaningful connection. They bring together leaders from various backgrounds—different regions, generations, and areas of expertise—creating a space that bridges divides and enriches understanding. Their collaborative framework goes beyond discussion; Issue Networks are operational, driving real-world initiatives that respond to emerging challenges and meet specific mission needs. In practice, these networks serve as powerful catalysts for change. Leaders don’t just share ideas; they join forces on projects that offer tangible solutions, from grassroots initiatives to global strategies. This model of collaboration allows networks to act quickly, mobilize resources effectively, and adapt as new challenges arise, making them essential drivers of Lausanne’s mission.

Issue Networks also play a critical role in identifying gaps within the global mission landscape. They spotlight areas of need that might otherwise go unnoticed, creating pathways for new initiatives and engagement. Lausanne’s networks occasionally serve as the only forum where certain mission topics are addressed, providing a unique and valuable space for issues that other organizations may overlook.

[CMIW] How does the Lausanne Movement envision it might support collaboration in the Research and Strategic Information Network?

[Tanya] Because of the unique platform the Lausanne Movement has as a network of networks, it has the opportunity, and indeed shares the invitation, to look at who might not yet be at the table. What voices might we be aware of that are not being heard and how can they be brought in to form and shape the conversation about the place of Research and Strategic Information in the Kingdom? Also, because Lausanne has an intergenerational focus, and a regional focus, and other Issue Networks, it can create opportunities for cross-collaboration for important projects and issues. Finally, Lausanne proposes to offer resourcing and support to networks where it is needed toward a vision and goal of healthy and effective networks.

[CMIW] How might the Lausanne Research and Strategic Information Network bring some blessing or benefit to the Lausanne Movement at large?

[Tanya] We have a very new space emerging, a new department that has come out of the process and product of the *State of the Great Commission Report* (SGCR). It will be led by Matthew Niermann, Lausanne’s Director of Global Research, and will be called “**Lausanne Insights for Global Horizons and Trends.**” This department will focus on global research and trends. A Global Voices Panel is being formed, and we are hoping many of our Issue Networks can be involved. We want to keep alive the strategic nature of the SGCR, and we invite members of the Research and Strategic Information to join us in this endeavour. Information will be coming to the network about new opportunities to engage.



Tanya Van Horne, Global Director for Issue Networks of the Lausanne Movement

Beyond Transactions: Embracing Collaboration in Mission

By Kirk Franklin

God’s mission is vast—bringing redemption and wholeness to all creation. This mission involves individuals, churches, and mission agencies working together. Mission agencies may serve as the church’s conscience, addressing areas where it has not fully fulfilled its calling.

Mission history has shown that partnerships can strengthen or strain mission efforts, depending on how they are formed and sustained. The key question remains: How can we share the gospel while honouring each other’s contributions?

“**Collaboration**” involves shared goals, joint decision-making processes, and mutual

accountability. “Partnership,” while similar, emphasizes shared risks and responsibilities based on trust and commitment. Some prefer the term collaboration due to past disappointments with partnerships—especially when financial support was withdrawn, effectively ending the relationship.

The Apostle Paul instructs us about a collaborative approach to mission:

- *Co-workers*: Paul used terms like ‘yokefellow’ and ‘fellow worker’ to describe those who laboured alongside him (Phil 4:2–3, Rom 16). He involved church leaders, envoys, and local believers in all aspects of his ministry, recognizing that mission is a shared effort.
- *Cooperative relationships*: His relationship with the Philippian church demonstrates how mission partnerships should function—marked by mutual support, shared prayer, and active involvement in each other’s work (Phil 1:5, 4:15). Paul saw these relationships as essential, not optional, for advancing the gospel.
- *Collaborative friendships*: Paul’s use of terms like *koinónia* (friendship and partnership) and *philadelphia* (brotherly love) underscores the relational foundation of missional activity (e.g., Rom 12:10). True collaboration is not just about structure and strategy but about genuine care, unity, and encouragement between all parties.

Mission history reinforces this need for collaboration. For example:

- The modern missionary movement initiated by William Carey in the late 1700s functioned with little emphasis on collaboration. Competition, logistical difficulties, and territorialism often led to fragmented efforts rather than cooperation.
- The 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference brought together over 1,200 leaders. It underscored the importance of cross-cultural relationships and mutual respect, highlighting the need to confront racism and paternalism in mission work. This gathering laid the foundation for the ecumenical movement and an envisioned cooperative approach to mission.
- The 1974 Lausanne Congress renewed the evangelical community’s focus on partnership. The Lausanne Covenant and later congresses emphasized unity between Western and Majority World churches. These events reinforced that true partnerships require humility, respect, and recognition of Majority World churches’ essential role in global mission.
- In 1999, the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission convened a key consultation, producing the Iguassu Affirmation, which called for a shift from financial-based partnerships to family-based models of cooperation. It acknowledged past power imbalances and theological shortcomings that hindered genuine collaboration. For example, Affirmation 13 states: *We acknowledge our past failures and pledge to address imbalances in resources and decision-making so that the world may see unity in our service to Christ.*

The history of mission partnerships highlights how mission agencies and churches must prioritize overcoming past inequalities. True collaboration also requires a commitment to shared decision-making that reflects the unity and diversity of the global church. Effective mission partnerships must be built on trust, transparency, and active participation rather than transactional exchanges.

For **mission information workers**, collaboration is not just an ideal but a necessity. No

single entity holds the complete picture of what God is doing worldwide. **Shared data and reporting increase accuracy, accountability, and strategic insight, strengthening mission partnerships.** Breaking down silos and working together allows mission information workers to create a more unified and faithful representation of God's work across cultures and contexts.

Kirk J Franklin

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Wycliffe Bible Translators

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The MESA Culture in Bible Translation

By David Cardenas

The Bible Translation Tables in Latin America serve as an innovative model that redefines **collaboration** in this context, inspired by what has been called the "MESA culture." This approach is based on the idea of the "third space," a neutral and safe environment where different ministry actors can come together to dialogue, share resources, and, above all, build relationships based on 10 values, some of which include cultivating friendship, cultivating trust, treating with respect, and collaborating well.

The MESA culture is inspired by the everyday act of gathering around a table. Thus, the "table" becomes a metaphor for a self-organized and practical interaction that allows for the articulation of a common purpose, such as God and the translation of His Word.

This model encourages leaders of Bible translation organizations, churches, indigenous ministries, and mission agencies to set aside protagonism, competition, or duplication of efforts to move toward a shared vision within the framework of God's kingdom, where each participant contributes their experience and knowledge as reflective practitioners of the mission.

Since its implementation in 2018, the Bible Translation Round Tables (MESA) have emerged as transformative spaces. Before this way of working began, there was a tendency in several countries for ministries to be marked by tensions, territorialism, and historical distrust, especially when it came to sharing information and deciding on projects. The experience of the "MESA" in Colombia, for example, reflects how these tensions were channeled through annual leadership retreats that fostered reconciliation and unity among leaders, allowing even representatives of indigenous church leadership networks to feel heard and respected.

The process of forming a dialogue table starts with the need to create an environment where all participants can express themselves without fear of judgment (polyphony). Thus, the concept of "linguistic hospitality" becomes fundamental: The inclusion of indigenous voices is promoted, ensuring that conversations take place in an accessible and respectful language.

The MESA culture is not only focused on discussion but also establishes practical processes for organizing and developing joint projects. MESA functions as an acronym to

highlight four fundamental aspects.

The "M for Mission," which answers the fundamental question: Why are we here and what do we want to achieve? In the case of translation tables, this involves identifying goals and objectives that allow groups to work in a coordinated manner, generating synergies that optimize the use of resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Similarly, the "E for Structure" (in Spanish "Estructura") component establishes who facilitates the dialogue, who participates, and how the space is organized so that all voices are heard. The "S for Health" (in Spanish "Salud") seeks to maintain interpersonal relationships and the spiritual vitality of the table. Finally, the "A for Action" proposes the practical steps a group decides to take in line with its purpose and objectives.

The Wycliffe Global Alliance (WGA), along with a regional team of leaders from various ministries related to Bible Translation and Scripture Use (called the Peripheral Team), has been catalyzing this way of working in countries across the region, aiming to have roundtables in fourteen nations by 2025, including Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, El Salvador, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico.

The regularity of meetings—whether virtual or in-person—and the creation of local facilitation teams, trained and mentored, have allowed these tables to evolve into spaces of dialogue and collaboration. Thus, the "Peripheral Team" acts as a catalyst and influencer, guiding the process and ensuring alignment with the shared vision and values.

In summary, the MESA culture constitutes a paradigm shift that values the principles of God's kingdom and the importance of relationships in the mission of translating the Bible. By promoting an environment of collaboration and respect, this model facilitates joint work among diverse organizations and leaders.

The experience of the Translation Tables in Latin America demonstrates that when a conducive space for dialogue and friendship is created, it is possible to break down historical barriers and move forward together in the mission of bringing God's Word, so that each person can experience the love and truth of the Gospel in their own language.



David Cardenas
Director of the Americas Area
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Defending Discovery: Protecting Truth in Collaborative Research

By S. Scott Friderich and Paul Dzubinski

Research involves managing multiple relationships and, over the years, both Paul and I (Scott) have valued **cooperating** with others. The most obvious cooperative relationship is the dynamic between researcher and subject, where truth is explored collaboratively. Another is the partnership with colleagues and vendors, which also requires collaboration toward a common goal. However, the most complex and often challenging relationship in missions research is between the researcher and the project sponsor or audience.

I, Scott, started my career in commercial research after earning a degree in Chemical Engineering. When working for a Fortune 100 consumer products company, my task was to uncover truth that benefited the company. Objectivity was straightforward—information was morally neutral and judged solely by its utility.

This changed when I transitioned to missions research. Unlike commercial research, which adheres to Popper’s principle of falsifiability^[1], I found many in the missions field more focused on defending a predetermined truth than on discovery. This is understandable, given that many come from academic backgrounds where defending a thesis is the norm. However, I believe research is at its best when discovery is prioritized over defense. (For clarity, I refer to lowercase “t” truth—objective realities about the world and its people. Ultimate Truth—the nature and character of God—is revealed by the Spirit, not the scientific method.)

A core challenge in missions research lies in the relationship with project sponsors. Unlike for-profit businesses that sustain themselves through revenue, missions work depends on grants and donations. This financial reliance creates immense pressure to produce the “right” answers, as findings that contradict expectations may threaten funding: a challenge faced in all non-profit contexts. The International Life Sciences Institute came up with eight guidelines for institute-sponsored research^[2] to address this issue along with other ethical challenges in sponsored research.

Scott and I encountered this first when we conducted a survey to estimate the number of professing Christians in Europe. Scott led the study in which the results suggested a higher number of Christians than expected. That troubled some American missionaries. Their funding relied on emphasizing the continent’s spiritual need, so they resisted the data instead of considering its implications. Their commitment to defending a belief overshadowed the opportunity to uncover reality. In this particular case, recruiting interests and sustainable resourcing resulted in the study being unduly criticized and overlooked.

Ideally, a research sponsor should interact with a researcher as a patient does with a doctor. While we all want good health, we also expect our doctors to seek out potential issues rather than avoiding hard truths. Just as ignorance of a medical condition can have serious consequences, refusing to face discovered truth in research can hinder gospel progress. True discovery, even when uncomfortable, is essential for making informed, impactful decisions. **And, as a warm reminder, God is our fiscal sponsor, God’s Son is our inspiration for recruiting, and God’s Spirit is the one who will lead us into all truth.**



S. Scott Friderich
Fonder & Principal at Clarity Research



Paul Dzubinski
Director of Innovation at Frontier Ventures

^[1].Theories cannot be proven but they can be shown to be false. “Scientific practice is characterized by its continual effort to test theories against experience and make revisions based on the outcomes of these tests. By contrast, theories that are permanently immunized from falsification by the introduction of untestable ad hoc hypotheses can no longer be classified as scientific.” Brendan Shea. n.d. “Popper, Karl: Philosophy of Science.” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved March 1, 2025 (<https://iep.utm.edu/pop-sci/>).

^[2].Rowe, Sylvia, Nick Alexander, Fergus M. Clydesdale, Rhona S. Applebaum, Stephanie Atkinson, Richard M. Black, Johanna T. Dwyer, Eric Hentges, Nancy A. Higley, Michael Lefevre, Joanne R. Lupton, Sanford A. Miller, Doris L. Tancredi, Connie M. Weaver, Catherine E. Woteki, and Elaine Wedral. 2009. “Funding Food Science and Nutrition Research: Financial Conflicts and Scientific Integrity1.” The Journal of Nutrition 139(6):1051–53. doi: [10.3945/jn.109.105668](https://doi.org/10.3945/jn.109.105668).



The **2025 MIW Virtual Conference** is scheduled for **June 16-18 from 1300-1500** each day Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)! Since the inaugural conference, more and more people are attending each year from more and more countries around the globe. We encourage you to attend if you would like to

- learn about exciting research projects,
- meet others from around the world with a passion for using information to further the Kingdom, and
- learn practical research skills.

We will send out a full registration form in the near future. To be sure you receive the full registration form, please fill out the pre-registration form [HERE](#).

<https://forms.gle/evAfwcrKTFYrPRMF8>

Meanwhile, please pray that God may continue to guide the development of this conference and use it to His glory.

If you have any questions, please email miwvcon@gmail.com.

Blessings!

The Organizing Team

See You There!

April - Panama - COMIBAM2025

Registration is now open for the 5th COMIBAM2025 Missionary Congress, which will be held from April 22 to 25, 2025 in Panama City. The discussions will focus on the effective

missionary actions of the church, which is in constant movement to advance in God's Mission, which never changes. (<https://comibam.org/es/>)

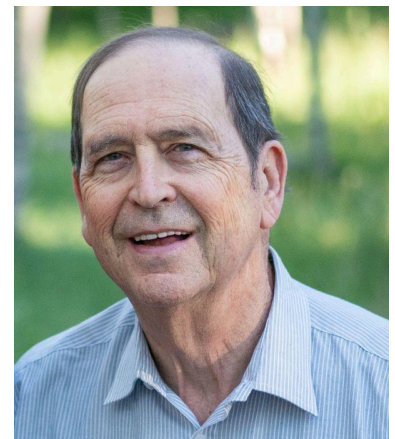
October - Brazil - CBM2025

Many Brazilian and Latin American researchers will be together in Águas de Lindóia (SP), Brazil, from October 6 to 10, 2025. This will be during the Tenth Brazilian Missions Congress 2025 (CMB2025). The theme of the congress will be "Your kingdom come, your will be done." CMB2025 is the main multid denominational event with a missionary focus held in Brazil. It takes place every three years. <https://amtb.org.br/cbm2025/>

Special Profile: Larry Kraft

1) [CMIW] Please tell us about yourself and your family.

[LK] I was born in 1955 and grew up near Baltimore, MD, USA. My wife Stephanie and I met as students at Johns Hopkins University (JHU), and we married during our senior year at JHU. I graduated in chemistry and worked as a research chemist for the US government for about 10 years. During those years, our two children were born, and we became more and more involved in the missions program of our local church. One day, a missionary our church supported challenged me with an idea that I had not heard of before: that world missions needed researchers. He said that since I did research, I should use that skill for the Kingdom. So we ended up leaving my job and, in 1987, moving the family to Brazil, where there was an expressed need for help in research.



2) [CMIW] What is your current ministry?

[LK] I am currently the global Director of Research Emeritus for our mission agency, One Challenge. My main responsibilities are to assist the rest of our team with the research projects they are engaged in and to mentor younger researchers. I am also the Lausanne Catalyst for Research and Strategic Information, which entails encouraging collaboration toward the use of good information for mission strategy development around the world.

3) [CMIW] What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?

[LK] During our years in Brazil, we were pleased to have developed, and put on the web, maps and graphs showing the least reached parts of the country. The Brazilian church is very open to the Spirit, and many churches and agencies responded by sending resources (funds and workers) to the most needy places. As a result, those peoples and places that the data indicated back then are now much more saturated with the presence of the Lord's Kingdom through His church. Brazil has become a potent source of new missionaries being sent out to the least-reached regions of the world.

4) [CMIW] What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?

[LK] In 2019 I survived a stroke which left me with mild dysarthria (a speech disorder characterized by difficulty in speaking due to damage or dysfunction in the muscles or nerves that control speech production). I no longer receive invitations to speak to large groups in order to share data and its uses for mission strategy. However, I do sincerely appreciate opportunities to speak one-on-one, or to small groups, to train, coach, or mentor younger mission researchers who will consistently put accurate and up-to-date information into the hands of missions decision-makers. I love to see knowledge and wisdom applied more and more to our efforts as we participate in Jesus' Great Commission. I dream to see that continue to happen!

5) [CMIW] Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?

[LK] I am happy to continue in my roles as a member of the Facilitation Team and Editorial Team for the CMIW and also as Lausanne Catalyst for Research and Strategic information. I am also open and willing to consult with, coach, or mentor any members of the community who want my help in doing their ministries in research and missions information. My term as a Lausanne catalyst will end next year. Is there anyone in our community who feels called to serve alongside me in this Lausanne capacity? If so, please contact me at <info@globalcmiw.org>. I would love your partnership and collaboration in this important function.

Information From the Word

by Jennifer Poling

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)

How have you lifted up someone when they fell? How has someone lifted you up? How have you collaborated with others? How have you seen a good return for your labor when collaborating with someone?

Announcing a Survey of the Brazilian missionary Force

The Brazilian Cross-Cultural Mission Association Research Department

The Research Department of the AMTB (Brazilian Cross-Cultural Mission Association) has officially begun the process of researching the Brazilian Missionary Force.

This new survey is intended to bring up-to-date data on the number and locations of Brazilian cross-cultural missionaries and also to better understand how missionary mobilization is currently happening in Brazil. AMTB is doing three different surveys simultaneously: 1) Missionary sending organizations; 2) Cross-Cultural Missionaries; 3) Local churches.

They are hoping to complete these surveys in time to present the report at the Brazilian Congress on Missions in 2025.

Please pray for this process and for a complete response!
Felipe Fulaneto (ffulaneto@gmail.com) - Research Department AMTB

Note

CMIW bulletins include links to important websites related to the bulletin content. The CMIW Editorial Team is vigilant about security concerns. While most hyperlinks are spelled out, extremely long links are embedded in the text. We encourage readers to always examine embedded links before clicking as a habit of secure electronic reading.

Final Details:

- With the help of God this bulletin is now produced quarterly in English, Portuguese and Spanish.
- The Editorial Team comprises Bert Hickman, Jennifer Poling, Larry Kraft, Rodrigo Tinoco and Stephanie Kraft.
- Please send any comments, suggestions or ideas to us at info@globalcmiw.org.
- Back issues can be found at www.globalcmiw.org/cmiwbulletin.